

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 214 without my signature.

Physician health programs provide a valuable service and help ensure public safety by encouraging doctors to obtain treatment to overcome substance abuse or manage mental illness. However, separating the operation of such programs from the Medical Board of California is inappropriate. Ideally, diversion programs would always lead to success, but the reality is that not everyone succeeds in recovery. It is critical that the licensing agency be directly involved in monitoring participation in diversion programs to protect patients and enable timely enforcement actions.

Properly designed and administered programs will protect consumers, help doctors overcome their illness; and get more providers back into practice and safely treating patients. Therefore, I invite the author and stakeholder community to engage my Administration on how to design such a program.

For these reasons, I cannot support this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger